

6 PARKS AND RECREATION, SHORELINE ACCESS, SCHOOLS AND CULTURAL FACILITIES ELEMENT

This element establishes policies for facilities that deserve more attention than they would receive if they were included in the Land Use or Open Space elements. Parks are especially valued in Alameda because existing acreage is small relative to population, and opportunities for expansion of the park system are few. Improved shoreline access has accompanied recent development, and additional opportunities to take advantage of the island setting are available. Acquisition of the site for the new Main Library and support for an arts center demonstrate interest in enriching the cultural life of Alameda.

(Photo: Lincoln Park photo)

6.1 PARKS AND RECREATION

Five categories of park and recreational open space exist in Alameda:

Neighborhood Parks are mainly for the use of elementary school age children, but also provide landscaped settings for picnicking or passive use by all ages, and greenery in a dense city. The City's dozen existing neighborhood parks range from 1 to 5 acres.

Community Parks have adult facilities such as lighted baseball diamonds and tennis courts, but also function as neighborhood parks. The four community parks range from 6 to 15 acres.

Community open space consists of special purpose facilities such as the Model Airplane Field (1 acre) and the Shoreline Park on Bay Farm Island (22 acres).

Greenways are landscaped linear open spaces with paths for walking, jogging, and biking. On Bay Farm Island they are owned and maintained by homeowners' associations; the General Plan proposes a City-owned greenway on the Main Island.

(Photo: Golf Course)

Region-serving Park and Recreation Facilities include Crown Memorial Beach and the Alameda Municipal Golf Courses.

Table 6-1 presents an inventory of existing parks and open space, and Table 6-2 lists five additional sites proposed by the General Plan. Existing and projected park acreage per 1,000 residents appears in Table 6-3.

California cities typically strive to meet standards calling for 3 to 6 or more acres of neighborhood and community park space per 1,000 residents, but this range is beyond reach at this stage of Alameda's development. The 1979 CLUP called for 4 acres in newly developed areas, a standard that will be met on Bay Farm Island if school open space is included in the calculation. Counting school open space (Table 6-5) (Text related to NAS Alameda deleted pursuant to (GPA 01-01)), there are 2.0 acres of community and neighborhood park space per 1,000 residents in 1990. The proposed parks listed in Table 6-2 will raise the standard to 2.3 acres per 1,000 at buildout.

About 95 percent of Alameda's children live within 3/8 mile of a park, the maximum radius for effective service as indicated by studies in other cities. The 1979 CLUP prescribed a quarter-mile service radius for Alameda, a standard that is not met on Bay Farm Island or in several Main Island neighborhoods.

EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT

Robert W. Crown Memorial State Beach is a regional shoreline jointly maintained by the City and the East Bay Regional Parks District. EBRPD is responsible for management, including planning and policy development. Heavy use during warm weather causes severe congestion in the adjoining South Shore neighborhood. During revision of the General Plan, street modifications that would limit use of Shore Line Drive were considered, but were rejected in favor of less drastic traffic controls, such as diversion during peak periods, that need not be a part of the General Plan.

San Leandro Bay Regional Shoreline, adjoining Alameda's East End, includes both public recreation and habitat preservation areas. The Shoreline is contiguous to the City's former trash disposal facility (affectionately known as Mt. Trashmore) on Doolittle Drive. EBRPD's plans encourage integration of any future development of Alameda's San Leandro Bay shoreline with the District's park and trail system.

TABLE 6-1
EXISTING PARKS AND OPEN SPACE, 1990

Type/Name	Acres	Planning Sector	Status(a)
Neighborhood Parks			
Buena Vista	3.6	West Central	D
Franklin	3.0	West Central	D
Godfrey	5.4	Bay Farm Island	D
Jackson	2.3	East End	D
Longfellow	1.1	West End	D
McKinley	1.2	East Central	D
Neptune	3.5	West Central	U
Parrott Mini-Park(b)	0.2	West Central	D
Rittler	4.8	South Shore	D
Tillman	3.5	Bay Farm Island	D
Woodstock	4.2	West End	D
Subtotal	32.7		
Community Parks			
Leydecker	6.3	Bay Farm Island	D
Lincoln	7.8	East End	D
Krusi	7.9	East End	D
Washington	15.0	West Central	D
Subtotal	37.0		
Community Open Space			
Boat Launches (c)	3.5	West End, Estuary	D
Bridgeview	1.5	East End	U
Harrington Soccer Field (d)	2.0	Bay Farm Island	U
Mastick Senior Center	1.0	West Central	D
Model Airplane Field	1.3	Bay Farm Island	D
Portola Triangle	2.3	South Shore	D
Shoreline	22.0	Bay Farm Island	D/U
Subtotal	32.6		

Type/Name	Acres	Planning Sector	Status(a)
Regional Park/Recreation Facility			
Crown Memorial Beach	80.0	South Shore	D
Municipal Golf Course	350.0	Bay Farm Island	D
Subtotal	430.0		
TOTAL	532.3		

Notes: See Table 6-5 for school open space.
(a) D = developed, U = undeveloped, D/U = partially developed.
(b) Alameda Housing Authority park.
(c) Encinal = approximately 2 acres; Grand Street = approximately 1.5 acres.
(d) Previously Oleander Park.

**TABLE 6-2
PROPOSED PARKS
1990-2010**

Name	Acres	Planning Subarea	Type
Mt. Trashmore	20.0	Bay Farm Island	Community Park
Estuary Park	10.0	East Central	Community Park
Ballena Isle	6.5	West End	Community Park
Greenways (Railroad right-of-way)	15.0	West End	Greenway
Park Street Pocket	0.5	Park Street	Community Open Space
Total	52.0		

TABLE 6-3
PARK ACREAGE PER 1,000 HOUSEHOLD RESIDENTS:
1990 and BUILDOUT

	Year 1990	Increment (Proposed)	Year 2010
Neighborhood Parks	32.7	0.0	32.7
Community Parks	37.0	36.5	73.5
School Open Space (Table 6-5)	70.0	0.0	70.0
Total	139.7	52.0	176.2
Household Population	69,200		76,400
Acres/1,000 Household Residents	2.0		2.3

(Figure 6-1: Parks, recreation, Schools and Cultural Facilities)

Guiding Policies: Parks and Recreation

- 6.1.a Expand Alameda's park system.
- 6.1.b Continue cooperation with the Alameda Unified School District to achieve optimum joint use of limited school open space and park space.
- 6.1.c Pursue park and open space grant opportunities and cooperative agreements with local, regional, and state agencies for expansion of the City's park and open space system.
- 6.1.d Promote the development and retention of private open space to compensate for the shortage of public open space.

Implementing Policies: Parks and Recreation

- 6.1.e Acquire and develop an Estuary Park of 10 or more acres.

The General Plan Diagram indicates a park along 1,400 feet of Estuary frontage west of Oak Street in Specified Mixed Use Area 5. This park will require a major funding commitment by the City, but will probably do more than any other single project to ensure Alameda's long-term quality. It could have the character of San Francisco's Marina Green and would attract all age groups to enjoy large and small boats on the Estuary, views of the Oakland skyline and hills, and active sports. The new park would serve a sector of the City that is short of park space, and would guarantee the high quality of housing proposed for the area.

- 6.1.f Require development and maintenance of approximately 7 acres on Ballena Isle for public park and shoreline access use as a condition of approval of development of the remainder of the island.

Ballena Isle is owned by the City of Alameda and is leased to a private party until 2029. The 1979 CLUP designated the area west of Ballena Boulevard as open space; an adjoining half-acre is used by the public for fishing and viewing. No alternative site appears suitable for expansion of park land to serve the West End.

(Photo: Basketball in Lincoln Park)

- 6.1.g Prepare a park plan for Mt. Trashmore when environmental conditions indicate that development could occur.

There were no restrictions in 1953 when the City placed log booms in the water to contain waste and began dumping. Since reclamation began, methane gas emission and settling indicate that extensive environmental analysis will be required, and development probably cannot occur before 2000.

- 6.1.h Develop a continuous greenway, east of Main Street north of Atlantic Avenue, and along the general alignment of the railroad right-of-way between Webster Street and Sherman Street, provided that the greenway design on each parcel allows for connection throughout the length of greenway. (GPA 96-04)

Long an eyesore, the 100-foot-wide strip west of Webster Street contains an underground utilities right-of-way that prevents building construction. Between Webster and Sherman, the greenway would occupy a portion of the Alameda Beltline Railroad yard, and could provide a buffer between residential and business park uses. The amount of land available for the buffer will depend on how much railroad yard space must be retained. The greenway should include a tree belt and paths for walking, running, and biking.

- 6.1.i Develop a pocket park serving the Park Street Business District and the Civic Center.

A half-acre with trees, benches, restrooms, and possibly a refreshment concession would be popular with Park Street shoppers and office workers. The pocket park could be within the Civic Center Specific Plan area or could be provided in conjunction with development of parking structures.

6.2 SHORELINE ACCESS AND DEVELOPMENT

Boating, fishing, and hiking are important uses of the shoreline that are not covered under the Conservation or Parks and Recreation headings.

Public boat launches and fishing piers exist on Navy land to the west of Encinal High School (2 acres) and at the foot of Grand Street (1.5 acres). The Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), which has regulatory jurisdiction 100 feet inland from the line of highest tidal action, has required construction of shoreline paths along Mariner Square, Marina Village, Park Street Landing, north of the Aeolian Yacht Club and adjacent to the Fruitvale Bridge as conditions of approval of development projects. Public right-of-way extends to the shoreline at 21 additional access points, which are indicated on Figure 6-1.

MARINAS

Small boats have replaced large ships along most of the Northern Waterfront, as former shipyards and docks have become sites for marinas. The citywide total of 3,124 berths in 11 marinas, designated as commercial recreation on the General Plan Diagram, is the largest concentration in Northern California. With completion of Grand Marina in 1988 (362 berths), little space remains within the U.S. Pierhead Line for additional berths.

Scores of marina-related businesses -- from small shipyards and woodworkers to yacht brokers and manufacturers of navigational instruments -- constitute a thriving sector of the City's economy that has attained a critical mass and can expect continuing growth.

BAY TRAIL

ABAG is the lead agency for planning and implementation of a plan to create a continuous public access corridor around San Francisco Bay, following the shoreline as closely as possible. The trail is to circle the Alameda portion of Bay Farm Island and the Main Island, except for the Naval Air Station, as shown in Figure 4-2. Most of the trail would consist of existing paths or sidewalks. New multipurpose paths are planned along San Leandro Bay at Mt. Trashmore and following former railroad rights-of-way in the West End. (See Policy 6.1.h.) A 10-foot bike lane would be cantilevered from the east side of the Bay Farm Island Bridge.

Guiding Policies: Shoreline Access and Development

- 6.2.a Maximize visual and physical access to the shoreline and to open water.

Despite recent progress in securing public access, opportunities are still very limited on the north and east shorelines of the Main Island. At marinas where access to the shoreline is available, long floating piers and a forest of masts still may block visual access to open water. Along much of the Northern Waterfront where there are no marinas, the bulkhead and pierhead lines are close together, so access to open water is assured.

- 6.2.b Regulate development on City-owned shoreline property to maximize public use opportunities.

Although the City's shoreline properties are under long-term lease, existing terms are sufficiently favorable to the leaseholders to enable development to include substantial public amenities and still be profitable. Unless the City regains full control of its shoreline holdings, this policy appears to be the best available response to the CLUP policy calling for stopping the trend toward private use of publicly owned shoreline.

- 6.2.c Ensure marina operating standards that prevent degradation of water quality.

See also policies within Section 5.1 of the Open Space and Conservation Element.

- 6.2.d Through design review of shoreline property, give consideration to views from the water.

Implementing Policies: Shoreline Access and Development

- 6.2.e Remove impediments to enjoyment of shoreline access where legal access exists.

Access points that are intentionally blocked or merely allowed to become overgrown prevent public use of public property.

- 6.2.f Cooperate with property owners adjoining shoreline access points to ensure that public use does not cause unnecessary loss of privacy or unwarranted nuisance.

- 6.2.g Prepare a Shoreline Access Plan in consultation with BCDC for areas where development proposals are expected to provide opportunities to improve or extend access.

(Photo: Pathway overlooking San Leandro Bay)

- 6.2.h Require shoreline access where appropriate as a condition of development approval regardless of whether development occurs within the area of BCDC regulation.

Access should be provided even if there is no development within 100 feet of the water's edge.

- 6.2.i Require off-site access as a mitigation when public access on-site is infeasible.

- 6.2.j Coordinate efforts with the School District in obtaining shoreline access at Paden School, Lincoln School, and Encinal High School.

- 6.2.k In cooperation with the U.S. Coast Guard and governmental agencies concerned with water quality, continue to maintain strict monitoring of compliance with environmental regulations by boat users.

See policies within Section 5.1 of the Open Space and Conservation Element.

- 6.2.l Seek grants for improvement of Bay Trail segments.

Coordination of implementation efforts will be handled by the City of Alameda Department of Public Works and the local advisory group to the Bay Trail Project for the East Bay Region.

6.3 SCHOOLS

Alameda Unified School District (AUSD) operates nine elementary schools (grades K-5), three middle schools (grades 6-8), two high schools and a continuation high school (grades 9-12). As in most California school districts, enrollment grew faster than district population during the 1980s. AUSD projections for 1990-1997 anticipate a 28-percent enrollment increase, three quarters of which will be in grades 6 through 12. Re-opening Paden School and completion of the new Bay Farm Island school will provide more than enough capacity in grades K-5, and only moderate capacity increases will be needed in grades 6-12. Table 6-4 presents enrollment data.

In 1989 Alameda voters approved \$47.7 million in bonds for school rehabilitation and seismic upgrading. Historic Alameda High School, long unavailable for school use because it did not meet seismic standards, will be upgraded, and Encinal High School will be expanded and refurbished. Other schools will be rehabilitated, and day care facilities will be provided at all K-5 schools.

Buildout in accord with the General Plan will increase household population by 10 percent above the 1990 level. Enrollment cycles can vary significantly over 20 years, making attempts at projection potentially misleading. It appears that sufficient capacity could be added on existing sites by shifting grade groupings or by opening closed schools.

TABLE 6-4
ALAMEDA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT:
EXISTING AND PROJECTED ENROLLMENT 1990-1997

School/Grade	Enrollment (Jan. 1990)	Permanent Capacity (Jan. 1990)	Projected Enrollment (1997)	Percent Change (1990-1997)
Earhart/K-5	645	550	484	
Edison/K-5	367	420	356	
Haight/K-5	540	532	500	
Longfellow/K-5	538	504	500	
Lum/K-5	482	504	500	
Miller/K-5	467	532	500	
Otis/K-5	431	504	356	
Paden/K-5	0	500	500	
New Bay Farm Island/K-5 ¹	0	550	484	
Washington/K-5	454	500	500	
Woodstock/K-5	583	560	500	
Subtotal	4,507	5,656	5,180	15%
Chipman/6-8	575	650	845	
Lincoln/6-8	622	650	840	
Wood/6-8	625	800	750	
Subtotal	1,822	2,100	2,435	34%
Alameda High School	1,232	1,700	1,700	
Encinal High School	1,045	1,550	1,700	
Island High School	137	200	200	
Subtotal	2,414	3,450	3,600	49%
TOTAL	8,743	11,206	11,215	28%

Source: Alameda Unified School District, July 1990.

¹ Also known as Village 4 school.

The College of Alameda, a unit of the Peralta Community College District, has space on its site to accommodate expanded enrollment. Eleven private primary and secondary schools enrolled 1,336 students in 1990.

Most of Alameda's school sites reflect 19th-century urban school standards. Only Encinal, Wood, Lincoln, Earhart and the new Bay Farm Island school have acreage that approaches post-World War II standards. The rest have small playgrounds, minimal athletic facilities and lack greenery. Nevertheless, schools provide important open space play areas for neighborhoods, as discussed in Section 6.1, above; those areas are counted towards meeting the City's parks standard. (See Table 6-3.) Table 6-5 provides an inventory of acreage for school sites and school open space.

Guiding Policies: Schools

6.3.a Support and cooperate with the Alameda Unified School District in its efforts that extend beyond classroom education, including:

- Making open space and recreation facilities available for community use;
- Offering and providing space for child care; and
- Contributing to the visual quality of Alameda and attitude of students toward their environment through the architecture, landscape treatment, and maintenance of the district's schools.

6.3.b Support the Alameda Unified School District efforts to obtain school impact fees needed to maintain adequate educational facilities to serve enrollment generated by new development in the City.

Implementing Policy: Schools

6.3.c Approval of residential, commercial and industrial development may be conditioned upon the mitigation of the impact of such development on the Alameda Unified School District.

TABLE 6-5
SCHOOL OPEN SPACE, 1990

School/Grade	Total Campus Size (acres)	Open Space (acres)	Description of School Open Space Facilities	Adjacent City Park	(acres)
Alameda Unified School District					
Earhart/K-5	8.7	5.0	Playfields		
Edison/K-5	3.2	1.4	Paved schoolyard, landscaping		
Haight/K-5	3.8	0.9	Paved schoolyard, playfield		
Longfellow/K-5	2.8	1.0	Paved schoolyard	Longfellow	1.1
Lum/K-5	4.2	1.7	Paved schoolyard, landscaping	Rittler	4.8
Miller/K-5	5.0	2.9	Paved schoolyard		
Otis/K-5	3.6	2.8	Paved schoolyard	Krusi	7.9
Paden/K-5 ^a	4.2	3.7	Paved schoolyard		
New Bay Farm Island	8.0	4.0	Paved schoolyard, landscaping	Tillman	3.5
Washington/K-5	2.6	1.4	Paved schoolyard		
Woodstock/K-5 ^b	5.3	2.5	Paved schoolyard	Woodstock	4.2
Franklin	1.2	0.4	Paved schoolyard		
Subtotal	52.7	27.7			
Chipman/6-8	4.0	3.2	Paved schoolyard	Woodstock	4.2
Lincoln/6-8	12.0	2.7	Paved schoolyard, playfield		
Wood/6-8	10.1	4.5	Schoolyard, track, playfields	Rittler	4.8
Subtotal	26.1	10.4			
Alameda High	6.6	1.8	Schoolyard, landscaping		
Thompson Field	0	2.3	Playfields	McKinley	1.2
Encinal High	23.3	9.0	Extensive athletic facilities		
Island High	0.8	0.6	Paved schoolyard		
Subtotal	30.7	13.7			
Peralta Community College District					
College of Alameda	62.0	19.2			
Total	171.4	71.0			

Notes: ^aPaden School, used as an adult school, will be reopened as an elementary school.

^bFranklin School is leased to Carden Redwood School (private) until 1992-93.

6.4 CULTURAL FACILITIES

ALAMEDA FREE LIBRARY

The Alameda Free Library, the fourth oldest public library in California, has three branches: the Main Library at Santa Clara Avenue and Oak Street, the West End Branch Library on Santa Clara Avenue at Eighth Street, and the Bay Farm Island Branch on Mecartney Road adjacent to Leydecker Park. A Children's Library, known at its completion in 1926 as the Boys and Girls Library, occupies a remodeled historic house behind the Main Library. Figure 6-1 shows library locations.

In 1986, a study of space needs confirmed the critical problems of the 1903 Main Library. In 1987, the City Council, upon recommendation of the Library Board, approved future construction of a new Main Library building, and in 1990, the LinOaks Motel and Apartments site at the corner of Lincoln Avenue and Oak Street was selected. The proposed Main Library is programmed as a two-story, 45,000-square-foot facility with a partial basement and adjacent below-grade and street-level parking. The City has applied to the State Library for assistance with construction financing (Proposition 85) and is proceeding with an environmental impact report on the new Main Library building. The historic Main Library will be restored and rehabilitated for an appropriate new use.

SPACE FOR THE ARTS

The need for an arts center was strongly felt by participants in a community workshop on the General Plan, who spoke of the richness of Alameda's artistic life and the lack of performance, rehearsal, exhibit, and classroom facilities. Theater companies, dance troupes, painters, sculptors, and filmmakers are continually searching for adequate space that might most efficiently be provided in an arts center. An arts center would enhance Alameda's cultural life and increase community awareness of arts resources.

ALAMEDA HISTORICAL MUSEUM

The Alameda Historical Museum was established in 1949 and is the official repository of the City's historic artifacts. It is currently located in leased space which is inadequate to effectively house and display its collection and to enable it to conduct educational and recreational programs for the benefit of the community. A permanent home for the museum in a more appropriate setting would insure the continuation of an important cultural resource that could better preserve and promote the rich history of Alameda.

Guiding Policies: Cultural Facilities

- 6.4.a Design the new Main Library as an important element of a future Civic Center.
- 6.4.b Encourage and support private groups in their efforts to create an arts center for Alameda.
Encourage the use of an existing architecturally distinguished building as an arts center.

Support could include assistance in obtaining grants, evaluation of the suitability of re-use of existing structures, and participation in making a site available at below-market cost.

- 6.4.c Encourage and support the Alameda Historical Museum in its efforts to secure a permanent, suitable facility.